

Indiana House of Representatives

News and Information

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FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE:

June 15, 2005

GOODIN SEEKS NEW COURT IN JACKSON COUNTY

INDIANAPOLIS – State Rep. Terry Goodin (D-Crothersville) has been asked by local officials to start the process of asking for the creation of a new court for Jackson County.

In a letter to members of the Commission on Courts, Goodin said the new court is needed to relieve an increasing backlog of cases that are preventing the county from handling its legal business in a timely and efficient manner.

"Our legal system is supposed to operate in a way that ensures people receive a just and speedy resolution to their concerns," Goodin said. "However, in Jackson County we are starting to see the wheels of justice slowed and even stopped because there are simply too many outstanding cases and not enough time for the current court structure to handle them."

Jackson County currently has a circuit and a superior court.

"The men who lead those courts – Jackson Circuit Judge William Vance and Superior Judge Frank Guthrie – have joined with the county prosecutor in requesting that a new court be added for this area," Goodin said. "My request for consideration by the Commission on Courts is the first step in seeing that request become reality."

The Commission on Courts is a legislative study group that meets in the interim between legislative sessions. The 13-member panel includes state representatives and senators, Indiana Supreme Court Chief Justice Randall Shepard, and local officials.

"The commission is charged with reviewing and reporting on all new requests for new courts, as well as changes in jurisdiction of existing courts," Goodin said. "If the commission does agree to study the request, it is expected under current state law to conduct at least one public hearing locally to determine the need for the new court. The need for the new court will be determined by the commission after an exhaustive study."

If the commission does agree that the request is valid, Goodin said he will file legislation to create the new court for consideration by the Legislature during its 2006 session. In past years, all requests for new courts are usually combined into one omnibus measure that is voted on by lawmakers.

"I am very hopeful that we will be able to move quickly on this request so that the Jackson County justice system does not grind to a complete halt," Goodin said.

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